



VOYAGEUR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GROSSE ILE NATURE & LAND CONSERVANCY

“If you have no honey in your pot, have some in your mouth.”
~Benjamin Franklin

→ Spring is in the air, and the world is starting to come back to life! Flowers are beginning to bloom—and with flowers, inevitably, come pollinators, such as bees. There are around 450 species of bees in Michigan, with a diverse range of physical characteristics, flower preferences, and habitats. Here, I focus on a native species that you’re likely to see buzzing around flowers on Grosse Ile—the common eastern bumblebee.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Bumblebees are among the largest bees you’ll see on Grosse Ile. They’re covered in black and yellow hairs, which help them transport pollen. You can often tell if one is nearby because you’ll hear buzzing—in fact, their genus name *Bombus* comes from the Greek word *bombos*, which means “a buzzing sound.”

RANGE & HABITAT:

As its name suggests, the common eastern bumblebee is a relatively common species in the eastern U.S. It’s found along the east coast from

NATIVE SPECIES OF GROSSE ILE

Common Eastern Bumblebee

(Bombus impatiens)

BY NICOLE DESJARDINS



GILLES GONTHIER / CC-BY-2.0

Ontario to Florida, with its range stretching west to North Dakota and Texas.

This species can be found in a wide variety of habitats—including natural landscapes such

as woodlands and prairies and human-dominated landscapes such as cities and agricultural areas.

DIET:

Pollen and nectar from

flowers! This species is a generalist, meaning that it forages on a wide variety of plants. These bees make honey from nectar and pollen by mixing these raw materials together, swallowing, and regurgitating them (which adds enzymes from their stomachs). Bumblebees don’t make enough honey for humans to harvest, but it’s enough to store in “pots” within the colony before being fed to developing broods.

LIFESTYLE:

Bumblebees build their nests underground and are social, meaning that they live in groups and work together to care for their young. An individual’s life cycle follows the same pattern as a butterfly. Eggs hatch into larvae, which are mushy grub-like creatures that don’t leave the nest and are dependent on adults for care. Larvae turn into pupae, during which they construct a “cocoon” and their bodies undergo a metamorphosis. They emerge as adults and take up jobs within the

— Continued on page 6

4/6

Animals in Spring
Sun, April 6, 1-2:30pm
Meridian Woods

4/22

Oriole Talk
Tues, April 22, 6pm
JCJ Resource Center

4/26 Earth Day

Island Cleanup Stewardship Event
Sat, April 26, 10am-12pm
meet at JCJ Resource Center

4/27

Guest Speaker Series
Sun, April 27, 11am-3pm
JCJ Resource Center

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to our special donors!

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Giving Made Easy

Enroll your Kroger Plus card to benefit the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy! Go to [kroger.com/communityrewards](https://www.kroger.com/communityrewards) to enroll (our organization number is AW710).

We ♥ our Volunteers



ISLANDFEST VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AND MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

Spring is here, meaning IslandFest is just around the corner—and we need YOU! IslandFest is the biggest event on Grosse Ile year after year. With some fresh ideas, booth redesigns, and plans for more community engagement than ever, the Conservancy has an important opportunity to make this event a catalyst

for major growth and outreach in our community. Whether you are walking in the IslandFest parade, helping design our first-ever Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy parade float, or sitting in our airport booth, we need more volunteers than ever. Don't worry; we will provide you with all of the information and tools

you need to feel confident sitting in our informational booth during the festival – arming you with easy-to-read FAQ sheets, as well as how to direct people to our website for more information. If the parade is more your style, we have a myriad of ways that you can get involved: float design, loaning a truck/trailer, walking, and so much more.

For more information on how you can get involved or to express your interest in being included in future communications on our IslandFest Kickoff efforts, please send your full name and phone number to ginlc.welcome@gmail.com with the subject: "IslandFest Volunteer".

The Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy thanks you in advance for your help ensuring the success of this event and the future of our organization.

DR. BRUCE JONES MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

A \$1,000 scholarship for the Grosse Ile High School senior who has exhibited academic excellence, and dedication to protecting our environment.

APPLICANTS MUST:

- Be a GIHS senior, or a Grosse Ile resident, who is graduating from high school in 2025
- Have a cumulative grade point average of 2.8 or above through the 2024-2025 fall semester

APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 6PM ON APRIL 7, 2025

TO APPLY:

- Contact the GIHS Counseling Office for information, application form, and submission, or
- Visit www.ginlc.org/bruce-jones-scholarship to print the application, which can be emailed to info@ginlc.org

Winter & Spring Stewardship

BY PETER KANTZ

Winter was exceptionally cold this year, preventing Stewardship from working outdoors most of the season. Instead, our time was spent working indoors, repairing equipment, and planning future projects. Options for repairing the parking lot at the Resource Center were investigated. The plan is to have a newly renovated parking lot by the end of the year. Additional improvements to both the inside and outside of the Resource Center building are also being investigated.

Water levels around Grosse Ile have dropped significantly in the past year, which will allow us to step up our efforts to control and eliminate the invasive nonnative plants that grow on our nature preserves.



Above: GINLC Monday Morning Stewardship Crew members Phil Smiley, Chris Zawistowicz, and Ginny Batch-Riling after a hard day's work at Hennepin Marsh Gateway.

The low water levels allow us to access and treat phragmites along the shore and in the marsh at the Bruce Jones and Hennepin Marsh Gateway preserves.

Improving and expanding the trails at the preserves will take place in the spring and summer months, as will planting of native flowers and bushes at the Hennepin

Marsh Gateway Preserve.

Additional trees will be planted at the Resource Center tree nursery. Once these native trees have grown to a sufficient size, they will be transplanted on our nature preserves. Some trees may be available for sale.

There are many opportunities to help with stewardship, maintaining the gardens at the Resource Center, helping with building maintenance, tending to the trees in the tree nursery, participating in our weekend stewardship events, or becoming a member of the Monday Morning Stewardship Crew, which handles the regular maintenance at all our properties. Contact GINLC if you would like to help.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT COMPLETION

BY CHRIS WILCOX

Griffin Wilcox of Grosse Ile BSA Troop 1261 recently completed his Eagle Scout project at the GINLC Bruce Jones Preserve. Griffin built a handicap accessible viewing deck/platform at the preserve, which is located near the bank of the Detroit River and Trenton Channel, just southwest of the Bridge and Meridian intersection. You can now enjoy the peaceful surroundings of woods and water right from the platform.



2024 Annual Membership Meeting Recap

BY PAUL GLOOR, PRESIDENT



The Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy (GINLC) held its 2024 Annual Membership Meeting on November 16, 2024, at the Grosse Ile Golf and Country Club. We extend our gratitude to the venue for hosting this special event, which brought together approximately 75 attendees.

REFLECTING ON 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

GINLC President Paul Gloor led the meeting and highlighted the Conservancy's stable membership levels, excellent financial health, and the protection of over 176 acres of land through ownership or conservation easements. This year, GINLC received a generous land donation, further advancing our mission. 2024 was a year of significant accomplishments!

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

President Gloor outlined an ambitious vision for 2025, which includes:

- Further restoration of Hennepin Marsh Gateway Preserve.
- Enhanced stewardship, education, and community engagement programs.
- Evaluating new land acquisitions.
- Deepening collaborations with Grosse Ile High School and like-minded organizations.
- Advancing projects identified in the Grosse Ile Master Plan.
- Strengthening the Conservancy's long-term financial sustainability.

WELCOMING NEW LEADERSHIP

Board elections resulted in the re-election of Paul Gloor,

Katie Kobiljak, Bill Nachtrab, and Doug Thiel to additional three-year terms. We are also pleased to welcome new board members Jason El-Zein, Jonathan Hodge, and Alisa Isom. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Madeleine Jones and Pat Selby for their service on the Board.

CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

This year, the "Conservationist of the Year" award was presented to Isabella Rista. Her outstanding skill in organizing the Resource Center grand opening, leading the team that conducted 26 educational events, and revitalizing collaboration with Grosse Ile Township High School will leave a lasting impact.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: KELLY ROSE

Our guest speaker, Kelly Rose, founder of the Ecorse Creek Committee, delivered an inspiring talk titled "From Concern to Action: Revitalizing Ecorse Creek Together." Kelly shared her journey of transforming the creek from a neglected waterway into a cherished community asset through grassroots organizing and collaboration with local governments and organizations.

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

The Conservancy's success would not be possible without our incredible volunteers. Your time, energy, and passion make a lasting impact on preserving the natural beauty of Grosse Ile. Here's to another year of dedication and progress as we work together to protect and celebrate our community's natural treasures!

Left: President Paul Gloor presents Isabella Rista with the Conservationist of the Year award. Right: Keynote speaker Kelly Rose keeping audience members engaged.

TEXTILE WASTE

BY SOPHIA SEBASTIAN, GHS SOPHOMORE

Not-so-fun fact: Last year the average American threw out 81.5 pounds of clothes. This is part of a nationwide problem that leads to 2.26 trillion pounds of textile waste across America annually, equating to 18.4 trillion pounds globally. Textile waste includes any discarded clothes, shoes, accessories, towels, blankets, or sheets that end up in landfills or illegally dumped. Since the 1990s, fast fashion—cheaply made clothes at abhorrent rates—has become one of the highest contributors to waste on our planet.



The fashion industry contributes to 3% of the world's total carbon dioxide emissions. Plastic fabrics like polyester need to be created through combustion in factories, most of which use fossil fuels. The fashion industry also adds to 20% of the world's water pollution. When textiles get recycled, most of them end up overseas in landfills. Those fabrics get blown into water sources, leaking microplastics and contaminating water.

These numbers seem large and entirely out of our control, and to a degree, they are. That is because we cannot make others' choices for them, but we can control our own choices to counteract textile waste across the world. The easiest way to help is to buy fewer clothes! The fashion industry currently goes through 15-20 seasons a year. Each trend season only lasts a few weeks before all of those clothes are no longer "cool." Avoiding buying new clothes frequently will keep the planet (and your wallet!) happy.

But what about that fancy dinner or wedding? Those one-time events with a very specific dress code? Renting and borrowing clothes is an amazing solution! Everyone has heard of renting suits, and over the years, more companies for renting dresses, such as Rent the Runway, have gained traction. You can also see if any friends or loved ones have an outfit you can borrow or are willing to give you.

So how do we preserve our clothes after they get holes and tears? Mending and sewing! If you don't already have sewing skills it may seem like a daunting task, but the

most basic of stitches don't take more than 20 minutes to master. Simple square patches are one of the best ways to fix large holes. If you're facing small rips, a ladder or whip stitch will help you the most. Additionally, innerwear items, like underwear, bras, socks, and pantyhose, can still find new life once they're holey. Brands like Subset take (clean) donations of these well-

worn items to create recycled mattress filling. Put an empty box in your closet to fill up with your single socks or tights with runs in them, and once it's full, ship it off!

Even with all of these tricks, sometimes you just need to buy new clothes. So what to do then? Invest in the basics. Think about what you wear the most. Is it khakis and dress shirts or cardigans and jeans? Look for high-quality brands that sell those items. It might take some time, but finding those long-lasting clothes will keep you from buying more in the future. Another great resource is second-hand or thrift stores. Thousands of people donate their unused clothes to the Salvation Army or Goodwill. Many of the unsold clothes there will also end up in landfills if no one takes them. Although it may not be an everyday occurrence, sometimes you can even find the quality brands you're looking for.

Even when we try our hardest, some fabrics just can't be used anymore. This is when we have to upcycle and get a little creative. Pinterest and family bloggers have hundreds upon thousands of ideas for repurposing. You can find tutorials anywhere from turning your shirts into towels to turning pants into dresses. It's also important to look into donating. Many animal shelters will take old blankets and towels for the fur babies. Our local T.A.I.L.S. and Grosse Ile Animal Shelter accept these donations. It's an amazing way to help out your community without sending more fabric to the landfill.

By making these changes to our everyday life, we can help our community and communities across the world. We need to take every opportunity we can to create a better tomorrow.

MEET YOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS!



Alisa Isom

Alisa has been a resident of GI since fall 2022, when she and her late husband moved to get away from traffic and noise, and to enjoy the abundance of open space available between houses and on the island overall. She's been employed with AAA for over 25 years in her current role as Director, Procure-to-Pay Back-Office Operations overseeing design, implementation, and continuity of various financial programs, policies, standards, and technology solutions. She has an MBA from Davenport University, as well as being a Certified Management Accountant (CMA) and a certified Project Management Professional (PMP). In her personal time, Alisa enjoys doing home improvements, mingling with friends, volunteering, kickboxing, walking, and reading.



Jonathan Hodge

Jonathan has deep roots connected to Grosse Ile and is passionate about nature. He is Grosse Ile born and raised, and graduated from Grosse Ile High School in 2003, and went on to earn a bachelors in business administration in 2008. After college, Jonathan started working as a financial advisor for Edward Jones & Co and has been in the role for 16 years. He was named partner in 2018 and received accreditation as a Certified Financial Planner in 2023. In 2020, Jonathan and his wife Jodi moved back to Grosse Ile and have two children. His favorite activities and passions include running, tai chi, gardening, foraging, wood working, waterfowl hunting, and fishing.



Jason El-Zein

Jason has a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering and a Master's degree in Industrial Technology. He dedicated 35 years to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5, where he managed the Emergency Response Program, addressing hundreds of oil and hazardous substance releases, primarily in the Great Lake States. Prior to joining the EPA, he worked for two years as a chemical engineer with the U.S. Army Defense Ammunition Center. As a resident of Grosse Ile since 1996, he and his wife have raised their two children here, and he looks forward to contributing to the preservation and stewardship of our environment.

— *Continued from cover*
colony, such as caring for larvae and foraging for food.

The life of a colony starts in the spring when a queen bee builds a nest. She collects some nectar and pollen from flowers and then begins to lay eggs. Once the adults emerge as workers, they begin caring for the brood and leaving the colony to forage for food. The queen continues laying eggs and the colony grows over the course of a season—some colonies can reach a size of up to 400 individuals! Towards the end of the summer, the colony will start producing male bees and gynes, which will serve as

queen bees in the following year. The gynes mate with males and then burrow underground for the winter, waiting for the cycle to start over again in the spring.

BEHAVIOR:

You're most likely to encounter bumblebees at flowers, where they'll be collecting nectar and pollen. If you're really lucky, you might witness buzz pollination. This is when a bee vibrates her body in an attempt to get the flower to release more pollen.

Bumblebees can sting, but they won't bother you if you don't bother them! If you see

one, leave her be—she's just looking for some nice flowers! Never swat at stinging insects if they get close to you—that will only make them angry.

VIEWING OPPORTUNITY:

To draw bumblebees into your garden, plant native flowers! I especially recommend St. John's wort, bee balm, black-eyed Susans, coneflowers, and sunflowers. Try to plant flowers that bloom at different times throughout the year, as this will ensure that bees always have food available. Avoid mowing if you can, especially in the spring—bumblebees and

many other bee species nest underground and mowing will disturb them. Also avoid pesticide use if you can.



The inside of one of Nicole's research colonies, showing workers, honey pots, and brood cells.

NICOLE DEJARDINS

FUNGI FUN ON GROSSE ILE

BY SKYLER LESLIE

Both spring and fall bring a bounty for foragers! The most common fungi “hunted” for are morels. Morels begin to appear in May, lasting for a few weeks. However, fungi grow in all sorts of conditions. The mushrooms we see are just the fruiting body of a complex mycorrhizal system! If you think of it like a fruit tree, the fungi is the tree (and its root system), and the mushroom is the fruit.

Fungi are organisms that feed off dead and decaying organic materials—these are called decomposers. They play vital roles in ecosystems and are often the signs of a healthy forest! Most fungi we see in southeastern Michigan have a few key components: the stem, cap, pores, and sometimes a ring. The stem is the stalk that grows upright from the ground, the cap is the top, and the spores are how fungi reproduce. Some species have a veil or a ring that splits off as it matures and encircles the stem. In most mushrooms, the spores are in either gills, pores, or teeth in the undersides of the cap. Gilled mushrooms are generalized into a group called Agarics, and most pored mushrooms are classified as Polypores or Boletes.

Grosse Ile’s unique ecology and abundance of protected areas means that it is a prime location to look for fungi. GINLC preserves are great places to start foraging! When starting to forage, I recommend simply observing - as you see things, take lots of photos, consult with ID guides, and learn different species before beginning to harvest. It is easy to misidentify fungi, so if you hesitate on an ID, it’s better to leave it be.

Other resources are the Michigan Mushroom Hunter’s Club (who publish field guides and recipes), Midwest American Mycological Information (MAMI), and the North American Mycological Association. MAMI has partnered with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) for the Wild-foraged Mushroom Certification Program, which allows you to gain a foraging certification.

When in doubt, spit it out! In a mushroom poisoning emergency contact your nearest poison control center in the US or Canada, emergency room, or your physician. US Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222



Chicken of the woods

(*Laetiporus*) often grow on decaying oaks in shelf or bracket-like formations. They often grow to be quite large, and are hunter’s orange with a lighter ring around the edge. The rich orange color makes chicken of the woods hard to miss!

Choice fruiting bodies have a moist, firm, spongy texture, are yellow to bright orange in color with yellow tips. Older, dry, over-ripe chicken of the woods become pale and brittle, having a chalk-like consistency.

There are no dangerous look-alikes that chicken of the woods can be mistaken for. *Laetiporus* fungi are polypores, meaning they have pores on the underside of their caps instead of gills

Another large, orange, mushroom is the Jack O’Lanterns fungus (*Omphalotus olearius*), often found in similar areas in fall. Jack O’Lanterns have gills rather than pores, and are easily distinguished based solely on that characteristic. Jack O’Lanterns are not edible.



Jack O’Lantern

(*Omphalotus illudens*) mushrooms often grow in clumps on decaying wood, fruiting on snags, stumps, and downed logs or from buried wood. They appear in late summer to early fall, and are one of the brightest fungi in the forest. Jack O’Lanterns are often confused for edible chanterelles. If you are unsure of distinctions, or are hesitating on IDing, do not consume! Jack O’Lanterns cause severe GI upset and are difficult to distinguish from chanterelles without experience.

They can be distinguished from chanterelles as Jack O’Lanterns have a thicker, fleshier appearance, tendency to form large clusters, and clearly separated caps when young. Chanterelles have false gills, which are ridges that resemble gills, and Jack O’Lanterns have proper gills. If you are unsure, leave it be!

Believe it or not, Jack O’Lanterns are bioluminescent. This means that the gills give off a subtle green glow (best captured in time-lapse photography).

EARTH DAY:

SATURDAY, APRIL 26
10AM - NOON
MEET AT JCJ RESOURCE CENTER
8801 MACOMB STREET

Island Cleanup Stewardship Event

PLEASE VOLUNTEER WITH GINLC IN THIS
KIWANIS-SPONSORED EVENT

SUNDAY, APRIL 27
11AM - 3PM
AT JCJ RESOURCE CENTER
8801 MACOMB STREET

Guest Speakers Series

COMING UP:

Animals in Spring

SUNDAY, APRIL 6
1-2:30 PM
MERIDIAN WOODS

Oriole Talk

TUESDAY, APRIL 22
6 PM
JCJ RESOURCE CENTER

Creepy Crawlies

SATURDAY, MAY 3
1-2:30 PM
GI BIRD SANCTUARY

Wild Birds Unlimited

TUESDAY, MAY 20
6 PM

JCJ RESOURCE CENTER

Fresh Fish: Sturgeon

SUNDAY, JUNE 8
1-2:30 PM
JCJ RESOURCE CENTER



TO RECEIVE EVENT NOTICES & NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL, CONTACT US AT [INFO@GINLC.ORG](mailto:info@ginlc.org)

SPRING 2025

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